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DINNER-TIME.

A WELL-KNOWN proverb tells that the rich may dine when they like, but the poor must dine when they can ; and although this question of dinner-time is a most important one both to rich and poor, it has been solved in a very different way at different times of the world's history.

As modern nations become more highly civilised, their hours gradually grow later and later ; but even if various reasons could be given to account for this declination, it is nevertheless a great evil, which no one has been either willing or able to stop. Some few men have chosen to keep to primitive hours, but by so doing they have been forced to leave society, and in consequence society has soon dropped them out of her memory.

The ancients were more natural in their habits than we are : thus, the Roman citizen rose with the lark, and went to bed when darkness came on, and it was only the rich who could afford to live by candle-light. Those idle persons among them who did so, were called by Seneca, in contempt, *lucifugæ*.

Fashion now forces her votaries to reverse the proper order of things, by dining at night and supping in the morning. Dr Franklin, when matters were not so bad as they are now, tried good-humouredly to shew the people of France the advantages to be gained by the adoption of early hours ; and he calculated that in the city of Paris alone 96,075,000 francs, or nearly four million pounds, would be saved every year by the economy of using sunshine instead of candles from the 20th March to the 20th September. The Emperor of Brazil, in his recent visit to this country, appears to have been sadly puzzled by our late hours. One day he visited Lincoln's Inn between six and seven in the morning, and was surprised not to find any lawyers there. Another day he started off from his hotel before breakfast to Kew Gardens, and returned for that meal at eight A.M.

Our forefathers had done half a day's work by the time their descendants think of rising, so that

candles and gas may in one sense be said to have demoralised the world. The House of Commons originally met at six or seven o'clock in the morning, but after a time the hour of meeting was delayed to nine. About two hundred years ago, noon for meeting, and six P.M. for parting, were considered very late hours by some ; and one hundred years ago, Speaker Onslow deplored in bitter terms the laziness of members who considered themselves unable to assemble before two o'clock in the afternoon. The time at which our legislators meet now is four P.M.

When men dined at an hour that many now think the proper time for getting up, they were ready for their amusements much earlier than we now take them. Accordingly, the theatres were opened early in the afternoon in the reign of Elizabeth ; and when Whalley edited the plays of Ben Jonson in 1756, the performances commenced at four P.M. Another class of entertainment, which is now unnaturally late, was carried on in the last century during reasonable hours : balls then began at six or seven o'clock in the evening, and ended at eleven and twelve ; but now they begin at the hour when they formerly ended.

Dinner-time is as much the era of the social as noon is of the natural day, and *l'après diner* is almost the only date in Cardinal de Retz's Memoirs of the Fronde. As all time before dinner is considered as morning, however late the meal may be taken, a notice of the changes in its time will be a good test of early and late hours.

England is now, and always has been, later in its habits than France. Louis XII. dined at half-past nine in the morning ; but at the same period in England, the court hour was eleven ; and when that king married the daughter of Henry VII., he gave up his regular habits, and took to English customs, in gallantry to his young bride. In consequence, historians tell us that he fell a victim to late hours, and died soon after his marriage.

Louis XIV. dined at twelve ; while his contemporaries, Cromwell and Charles II., were dining

at one. An old monastic triplet gives the dinner-hour as early as it could well be fixed;

Lever à cinq, dîner à neuf,
Souper à cinq, coucher à neuf,
Fait vivre d'ans nonante et neuf.

A subsequent proverb shifts the time for all the operations an hour later:

Lever à six, dîner à dix,
Souper à six, coucher à dix.

From the Northumberland Household Book (1512), we learn that the family rose at six, breakfasted at seven, dined at ten, supped at four P.M., and shut their gates at nine.

When travelling in little frequented parts of Germany, we often find English customs of centuries ago flourishing there at the present day. Eleven and twelve o'clock are very usually the hours for dinner in all parts of that empire. In England, the court dinner-hour remained at eleven from the reign of Edward IV. to that of Henry VII., but the middle and lower classes dined at nine or ten. The fashionable hour in Henry VIII.'s reign came to be twelve, when Sir Thomas More dined, and it remained fixed there for many years. It is still the working-man's time, and is likely so to remain for centuries, as it appears to be nature's own time. Fashion may make laws as she will, and call meals by various names, but at mid-day most persons feel the necessity of taking food.

When the dinner was eaten early in the morning, it was not always the practice to take a previous meal, so that, in point of fact, the old dinner was a knife-and-fork breakfast, such as is common now on the continent. In Cotton's *Angler*, the author says: 'My diet is a glass of ale as I am dressed, and no more till dinner.' Viator answers: 'I will light a pipe, for that is commonly my breakfast too.'

In 1700, the dinner-hour had shifted to two o'clock; at that time Addison dined during the last thirty years of his life, and Pope through the whole of his. Very great people dined at four as early as 1740, and Pope complains of Lady Suffolk's dining at that late hour; but in 1751, we find the Duchess of Somerset's hour was three. This, however, only shews that slightly different dinner-hours were prevalent at the same period; and we know that, when the Duchess of Gordon asked Pitt to dine with her at seven, his excuse was, that he was engaged to sup with the Bishop of Winchester at that hour. In 1780, the poet Cowper speaks of four as the then fashionable time; and about 1804-5, an alteration took place at Oxford, by which those colleges that dined at three began to dine at four, and those which dined at four postponed their time to five. After the battle of Waterloo, six o'clock was promoted to the honour of being the dinner-hour. Now, we have got on to eight and nine; the epigram tells us,

The gentleman who dines the latest
Is in our street esteemed the greatest;
But surely greater than them all
Is he who never dines at all.

We have seen that, within four hundred years, the dinner-hour has gradually moved through twelve hours of the day—from nine A.M. to nine P.M. Nature, however, will revenge herself on fashion, and have her own way in the long run;

for as the dinner-hour becomes gradually later, it must inevitably return to the early hours of past centuries, and the Irishman's description of his friend's habits will be literally true of us, for we shall not dine till—to-morrow.

THE CRUISE OF THE ANTI-TORPEDO.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

I HAVE now explained, as well as my limited knowledge of nautical science enables me to do, the internal economy of our gallant bark: it will be allowed that it was at once ingenious and formidable: nor was our bite to be despised, since our One Great Gun threw shells of one thousand and one pounds, calculated to burst into exactly a thousand and one pieces, and to make considerably more noise than the publication of the *Arabian Nights*. Our crew had the utmost confidence in the vessel; but my heroic brother-in-law—uncertain, coy, and hard to please, as he was six days a week—would occasionally, upon a Sunday, confide to me that he had not entire confidence in that part of the machinery which depressed us below the level of the waves. We couldn't get out of sight quite quickly enough to please him; and his men were being continually exercised, on weekdays, at this manœuvre. There was always somebody at the weather-gage—I say weather-gage for want of the right word—to call out in nautical language: 'Stow it: we are already twenty feet down, and another revolution will bring the funnels under water:' but that sinking-drill, as it was called, always put me in a cold perspiration. Think of what the consequences of 'another revolution' would have been! We were not Paris. An inch is allowed to make a considerable difference in a man's nose, but it would have made a much greater one with us.

Toll for the brave—Great Grimsby is no more; He ran the thing too fine, so now his race is o'er.

I used to endeavour to distract my mind during these frightful crises by the composition of elegiac verse. To interfere was useless. On the first occasion when the weather-gage shewed 'nineteen,' I cried out in an agony (anticipating the proper authority): 'Stow it;' but our commanding officer was of that determined character that remonstrance made him more foolhardy, and he actually worked us down to twenty-two feet six inches. It was such a very near thing that time, that if I hadn't lost three pounds (by profuse perspiration), and thereby lightened the vessel, it was acknowledged by all hands (though they never thanked me for it) we should have gone under irrevocably. Though I had lived in Scotland two years and a half, I had never before so appreciated Sundays.

Fighting was bad enough (to a supernumerary mate), but not so bad as sinking-drill. When the deck was cleared for action, and our two funnels laid flat, we presented (with the trifling exception of our One Great Gun) to the observation and percussion of the enemy a mere *superficies*—'the movement of a line' as Euclid elegantly expresses it. They might as well have shot at a wafer-biscuit held edgewise. We never *took* a vessel. A council of war, in which nobody was allowed to take part except the captain, was held on board, whereat it was suggested that the enemy should be put upon his honour; that

all captured ships, as in the games of *Prisoner's Base* and *French and English*, should hold themselves to be upon our side, and should assemble in some secluded spot (say the Bight of Benin) until we could form a fleet of our own sufficiently large to cope with the European navies, now all confederated against us; but the idea was abandoned as impracticable. The conduct of the French after Sedan had brought the *parole* into reproach; their words were by no means held so good as their bonds. 'No, drat 'em!' cried our commander, suddenly interrupting himself, and breaking up the 'council,' 'I'll think the lot!' And so he did.

Our plan of operations, which was immediately carried into effect, was as follows. Under cover of night, we steamed into the centre of the British Channel, and sunk ourselves a little (like a lobster-pot), with only our two water-lilies visible. With the dawn of day we emerged like Amphitrite from the wave. Never shall I forget that first fair morning in early spring. It was April 1, 1881, and the wind was easterly. From the port of Dover we could distinctly perceive two white-winged travellers of the watery waste ploughing their way towards us. The elder of the two travellers (or, at all events, the bigger of them) had the German flag flying above the Union-jack, indicating a prize. 'It was all prizes and no blanks' with them now, as Bismarck had wittily observed; but there is many a true word spoken in jest; and never shall I forget our captain's looks when he beheld this spectacle of our country's dishonour, and muttered between his set of teeth: 'No blank cartridge, gunner: think her!' Both came on; the younger of the two, decked from stem to stern, and shooting across her consort's bows, like a young brigantine, as she was, in thoughtless glee. I felt for them both, but especially for the little one. They were still three miles off, when our gunner got them in line.

'One moment,' said I courteously; 'let me go down below and put something into my ears before it goes off.'

The sailor looked at me contemptuously, thinking, perhaps, I spoke of ear-rings; but if so, it was very unreasonable, for he wore them himself; and FIRED.

I had had some experience in big guns: I had heard the Bishop of Peterborough preach, and the Great Vance sing; I remember Reports of the Royal Commissioners upon several subjects: but everything I had yet heard was but a whisper compared with the roar of that tremendous weapon. Light travels more quickly than sound, and I saw sparks (probably a thousand and one of them) before I heard that terrible thunder; the next moment we were alone in the Channel, and the men were at sinking-drill. If Echo is a nymph, she has a very masculine voice upon occasion: long after we were down below, we could hear her, on both coasts, roaring as though Pan had caught her at a disadvantage. Our crew took it all with phlegmatic calm. I saw the captain make a couple of strokes in chalk upon a board, such as omnibus conductors use to set down the number of their passengers, and which was fated, in the end, to be filled with such brief mementoes of our prowess; I saw the Big Gun, which had just spat iron and flame, quietly smoking, as though it was not the least the worse for it; I saw the call-boy ringing five bells for breakfast. Immediately afterwards I saw the first

lieutenant boxing his ears for being before his time—alas, how many of the best of us suffer from the same cause!—but I did not hear him nor his victim's cries; for I was Deaf.

And here I gladly take the opportunity of recording how kindly a heart lay beneath the rugged exterior of Samuel Grimsby. That portion of my narrative which is of necessity derived from hearsay, could never have been written but for his disinterested aid: for the rest of our cruise I never recovered my hearing—sufficiently at least to understand any orders in connection with my duties—and he most generously lent me his speaking-trumpet, snatching it away in haste only when it was absolutely essential to navigation. Once he hollered down it by mistake—while it was in my ear—but that was not his fault, though it was my misfortune: his words (which I shall never forget) were: 'Put her 'starn.'

It is unnecessary, and would be repulsive, to narrate the annals of such victories as ours. Each stroke on the slate had at last to stand for ten (as at Bezique), in order to save space. Nothing else was saved or spared. 'They are smelling the lilies,' was the grim phrase used on board, when a squadron or so of men-of-war, attracted by our elaborate funnels, would gather about them overhead, like death's head moths around a candle. Then all hands would be called (except mine) for 'rising-drill,' and the squadron would be no more. We gave no quarter, nor anything like it; we made no truce, but only the smallest pieces.

It is not to be supposed that vigorous efforts were not made for our destruction. When cannon-balls and torpedoes were found to be ineffectual, endeavours were made to run us down; not only by detraction, but by Rams. Two of the very largest of which the continental navies could boast made at us at once, from opposite directions, and at full speed. We waited with characteristic coolness until they approached, then fired at one of them, and missed: the unaccustomed nearness of the object had fatally affected the gunner's aim. On came the rams at racing pace, in hopes to prevent our reloading, and bent on demolishing us between them. But every man was at his post, for sinking-drill: and just as the final rush of our antagonists was made, we dived like a moorhen, and, unable to stop themselves, they ran upon one another, like infuriated stags, smashed in their iron foreheads, and foundered. If they had used less haste, waited quietly above us, and corked up our funnels, it would have been all over with England's last hope: but headstrong impetuosity is seldom the companion of astuteness.

At last the Channel—and, indeed, the ocean everywhere—was without a sail or a funnel. We were monarchs of all we surveyed; but there was nothing to survey except the sea itself, which would, of course, have been a waste of science. All the ships that still floated were hard-a-port, and stuck there, and I did not blame them for it. We might have carried the flag of England everywhere, undisputed rulers of the waves, if we could only have been contented with our proud position; and perhaps in the end we should have brought the stubborn foe to reason by mere blockade. But we had been at sea three weeks, and two essentials to the happiness of our crew were wanting.

Our supply of Rum was exhausted, and we had no Female Society.

A council of war was again held, and this time everybody was allowed to speak. For my part, I was for stopping where we were, and patiently trusting to the course of events to reunite me with dearest Belladonna, I mean Arabella, at Southend, the port it was proposed to visit to take in wives; while as for rum, I detested it; besides which, it must be confessed that I had in my bunk a private supply of excellent dry sherry, which maintained its peculiar character even under water. In my lecture (for I cannot speak extempore), I was very careful not to aggravate my marine friends by argument or denunciation; but contented myself in the one case with exhibiting Mr George Cruikshank's Bottle Tricks, and in the other with reciting some lines of my own composition in ridicule of the idea that any lady of distinction, not to say of respectability, could be induced to marry any one of us of her own free will, considering the discontents of our mode of life.

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That may abide
Beneath the tide,
Wherein the great sea-monsters move.

There were not more than five hundred verses, but they were listened to with great impatience; and when the votes came to be taken I was left in a minority of one, except the captain, who did not vote. He was a widower, and his feelings, of course, were dead against admitting the female element on board; but, on the other hand, he missed his rum. The result of our deliberations filled me with dismay; for if dearest Arabella should hear of so large a consignment of the sex to the *Anti-Torpedo*, to the exclusion of herself, there were sure to be words (at least) in consequence, if we ever met again, no matter at what distance of time; and the question being in some sort a family one, I did not hesitate to lay it before Grimsby.

'Yeth,' said he, 'you'll catch it hot, no doubt. But private feeling must always give way to national considerations. The eventual object of the expedition, you see, is to rethore the country.'

As I did not see, he explained. The idea of the more farsighted portion of the crew was to establish a colony of their own on some tight little island destined to be another England, and eventually to reconquer, or recover the mother-country. Free-born Britons were no more to be looked for where wily Bismark, red from Dorking's field, bruised Anglia's realms beneath his iron sway. So it was necessary to perpetuate the breed elsewhere.

'Goodness gracious!' exclaimed I, 'would you then carry off the daughters of Southend by force, as the Romans snatched the Sabines?'

'Never!' cried the captain, striking his naked breast, which, I observed for the first time, was simply but tastefully tattooed. 'They will be willing brides, for each man on board the *Anti-Torpedo* is worth his plumb. You look incredulous; learn, then, that our ballast is entirely composed of notes of the Bank of England: ten million of them were given to us for that special purpose, after the conquest of the country, as being of no use to anybody, including their owners—the national credit, for the time, being destroyed. But,

* I must premise that we had a chaplain on board, and that everybody's intentions were strictly honourable.

pleathe the pigs, we will re-ethabliblith it; and, in the meanwhile, if at any foreign port thethe notes shall be declined in payment for our needth'—and here a terrible expression crossed his weather-beaten features—'Grimthby will know the reason why!'

The whole scheme looked certainly practicable enough, as might have been expected from a man of G.'s good plain common-sense and business habits; and I have no doubt it would have been carried out to the letter, but for an incident that occurred within a few hours of the above conversation. While running into the mouth of the Thames, and when the long pier of Southend (with Arabella, for all I knew, at the thick end of it) was actually in sight, we fell in with a despatch-boat bound for Sheerness, and cut her in two. In the larger fragment we found a file of newspapers, which, as may be supposed, would indeed have been a treat to all of us, who had heard nothing of what was going on at home for so many weeks. The captain, however, seized on the journal of the latest date, and sat upon the rest. It was a selfish act, but we did not murmur, being subject to the articles of war. So strictly was discipline maintained, indeed, that—when petticoats were actually seen fluttering on the pier-head, and it was morally certain that strong liquor of some kind could be procured within ten minutes—not a voice was raised in remonstrance when my brother-in-law suddenly started to his feet and shouted: 'Ease her, stop her, back her, damn her, *put to sea!*'

I never saw him moved so, nor the ship either. As we retraced our steps towards the British Channel, he beckoned me down into his cabin, inquired in a voice broken by emotion if we were alone, and, having received an answer in the affirmative, at once burst into tears. Blood is thicker than water, and a relation by marriage is, after all (unless it's a mother-in-law), better than any member of a crew, who must naturally detest you as their superior officer.

'Thimon,' sobbed he; 'lithen.' Then he told me how his darling hope had been to isolate the German conquerors, so that they should be as exiles in the land which by brute-force they had acquired, ever pining in vain to return to, or even to have a syllable of news (except on Sundays) from their native shore, so that at last they should be driven to come to terms, and give the island up again to its rightful owners. The contents of the newspaper had dissipated this hopeful scheme; for the Germans, it informed us (who, of course, had never been so well off in their lives), were perfectly happy and comfortable in their new quarters, and seemed to have nothing to wish for except that (as in our case) they felt the want of female society. No British maiden, or even widow, would so much as light a pipe for them, far less harbour the flame of mutual love. They had but one answer for the alien: 'Our match lights only on the box'—by which they meant the native box, and that no foreigner need apply.

'But, my dear Sam,' said I, 'this is no more than I expected. I have been to Germany myself, where I have seen little to eat and little to drink, and a great deal to avoid. The brightest hope of every German—and nineteen-twentieths of the French—has always been to become a naturalised Englishman. Why, then, should you wonder at the complacent satisfaction of the invader?'

'I know all *that*,' returned Grimsby impatiently; 'I know that nobody prefers the continent to England who isn't a cuthed fool; but they have some domethic feelingth these Germans, and I wath in hopes that, by cutting off all intercourse with their native land except on Sundaths,* we should bring them, through theentiment, to reason. But all my efforts have been in vain. Look at this.' He pointed with trembling finger to a paragraph in large type : ORDER REIGNS IN BERLIN.

'All right,' said I; 'why shouldn't it? Though Bismark is not there, Moltke is.'

'Look at the *date*, you fool,' cried Grimsby abruptly. "'Tuesday morning,'" that's yesterday morning. Somehow or other, these crafty fellows have contrived to secure week-day intelligence. I thought I had thunk all the bledth thifth in the Channel on the last lawful day.'

'That is true,' said I; 'but there is the Submarine Telegraph, you know.'

I never knew a fellow-creature so terribly taken aback in my life as was poor Grimsby. He was a good sailor, but one of the old school, and he had clean forgotten the existence of the Submarine Telegraph; with the nature of it, I need hardly say, he was very superficially acquainted. Some persons would have ridiculed their brother-in-law under such circumstances, but I merely rallied him with a glass of dry sherry, and then explained the matter upon scientific principles. Grimsby was greatly interested. It was beautiful to see his rather ordinary mind expand, as it were, under the sunshine of my superior intelligence. I talked of 'return currents,' 'inductive embarrassments,' and 'Chatterton's Compound,' in a very popular and taking way. At first he was sceptical; he didn't believe in any message that was not given by the human voice through the speaking-trumpet. He said: 'Nonthenth!' 'Rub-bith!' 'Impothible!' 'Pooh, pooh!' then, as conviction began to grow upon him: 'Stwange!' 'The deuth it ith!' 'You don't thay tho!' 'Bleth my thole!' I happened to have a small electric battery in my cabin, and I brought it in, and gave him a wire to hold. If I had told him that the principal use of the machine was to sweat sovereigns (*which it is*), he could not have been more shocked. His hair stood on end, and he swore in the most frightful manner. I had to recall him to a sense of dignity by reminding him that similar unpleasant sensations were experienced by everybody who received a telegraphic message. I told him how even high-born ladies got in time to be quite used to it, and instanced pious William's frequent messages during the Franco-German war to his royal Augusta. At that moment, perchance, said I, he might be telling her that, thanks to Providence, he had got a pretty tidy requisition out of Rutlandshire, capital Oakham.

'Eureka!' screamed the captain, rushing to his feet; 'I have got it!'

I thought he had got hold of the wire again, but it was only an idea, which, however, to say truth, was almost as great a rarity with him. 'Thimon,

continued he enthusiastically, 'we will pick up that telegraph.'

'Sammy,' said I, extending my arms in a rapture, 'we'll do more: we'll send our own messages by it through my battery.'

Then an event occurred which has only happened once before in the whole naval history of Britain: overcome by gratitude and emotion, the iron heart of the gallant sailor (once of oak) fairly melted within him, and he whispered in broken accents: 'Kith me, Thimon!'

PRISON IN PATAGONIA.

VERY little is known of the interior of that immense district of Southern America which is called Patagonia, and which we used to associate chiefly with the idea of savage races, of gigantic stature and immense strength, and who possessed for us a shadowy kind of interest and romance. The last stronghold of the 'noble-savage' delusion was Patagonia, because the people, beyond the coast tribes, who dwelt therein were actually unknown. But M. Guinnard,* whose adventures are more incredible than those of the famous Baron Munchausen—though we are assured, on grave authority, they are perfectly veracious—has arisen to drive away these mythic fancies into the limbus of all exploded notions, and to paint for us, in the dwellers in one of the most sublime regions of the beautiful earth, a race of the fiercest and most revolting savages in existence.

If one studies the map affixed to M. Guinnard's book, the curious mingling of names quite familiar and names utterly unknown becomes apparent. There lies the vast peninsula, like the tail of some huge animal of the beaver tribe, splay and blunt, between the two wide oceans. On the Atlantic side, Buenos Ayres and Rosario, the Salado River and the Serros meet one's eye like comparatively familiar acquaintances. Then come Bahia Blanca, the peninsula of St Joseph, the Gulf of St George, Cape Blanco, and the port of Santa Cruz. It is curious to think of the civilised dwellers in such places as Buenos Ayres and Rosario, as they gaze from the heights which bound their cities, and from the outlying plains, so vast and so dreary, towards the illimitable wastes, from which they are divided by neither land-defence nor ocean barrier, with their terrible possessors. The Indian jungle and its fierce inhabitants, the great oceans and their monstrous tenants, are far less awful to contemplate; for between us and the dreadful creatures who roam over the Pampas, and possess the desolate places, there is the mysterious, horrid kinship of a common race.

Turning to the Pacific side of the peninsula, we find the comparatively civilised regions of the coast, divided from the interior, or Patagonia proper, by a magnificent mountain-range, concerning which we shall doubtless hear wonders some day, similar to those which have been disclosed by naturalists visiting other Cordilleras of the Andes, when exploration shall have reached the Corcovades Mountains. From Valparaiso and Santiago southwards, the names cease to be familiar; Villa Rica, Valdivia, Araucania, and Chiloe have but vague

* I have forgotten to mention that our good and gallant captain suspended operations on the Sabbath, which he generally passed in his cabin reading *A Kiss for a Blow*, or other peaceful tract, and watching the clock. 'Let them accumulate,' was his quiet remark with respect to the enemy's shipping. At 12 P.M. precisely, we had 'rising-drill' and went at them.

* *Three Years' Slavery among the Patagonians: an Account of his Captivity.* By A. Guinnard, Member of the Geographical Society of France. Translated by Charles S. Chettam. London: Richard Bentley & Son.

meaning to English readers. Below the Gulf of Las Penas, the mountain barrier is narrower; it dwindles away, and an immense unexplored plain, bearing merely the tribal designation 'Pilmaches,' continues the peninsula to the Tierra del Fuego. The whole of this vast interior below the central Pampas is occupied by savage tribes, and M. Guinnard has penetrated farther into it than any other European. This extraordinary feat was unintentional and involuntary, and was the result of one of the most terrific mischances which can befall a traveller—that is, the being made prisoner by a tribe of wandering savages.

In 1855, M. Guinnard sailed from Havre to Monte Video, and very narrowly escaped shipwreck on the English Bank. He landed amidst the booming of cannon, just in time to witness one of the innumerable insurrections which are always just breaking out, or just being quelled, in that part of the world. From Monte Video he went to Buenos Ayres, and there he found another insurrection, and was advised that the lives of foreigners were not secure. He had some ideas about trading in those regions, but they do not seem to have been distinct or fixed; and he was soon off on a wandering tour to the source of the Rio Quéquène, a rarely traced watercourse, seldom marked in any map. He explored all the remote and small districts in that unknown region, and not seeing his way to trading, returned to Quéquène Grande, with the intention of supplying himself with provisions for a journey to Rosario, but also reckoning much on the hospitality of the estanceros whose cattle-farms he should pass on his way. Here he met an Italian, named Pedritto, misled, like himself, into this useless part of the country, and the pair determined to combine their resources, and try their fortune together. A glance at the map will give one an idea of the nature of the enterprise; and the direction taken by the line marking their route—which goes exactly away from Rosario, from the point of departure—makes it evident that they began by mistaking their route.

Neither of these hopeful youths could ride, in a country where the natives are centaurs in an early stage of 'development'; and both were entirely ignorant of the Spanish tongue, so that guides were dispensed with, as they could neither explain their intentions nor understand instructions. They purchased guns, and for each man five pounds of gunpowder, five pounds of lead, a few articles of dress, and some eatables of a portable kind. 'We were not ignorant,' says the author, with that simplicity which is peculiar to fool-hardiness in a Frenchman, 'of the numberless difficulties and dangers by which we might be assailed; but having determined to brave all, we only took the precaution to purchase a compass and a sun-dial, and to make out a plan of our intended route, on which each day's journey was laid down; this done, we started with that confidence with which resolution and hope inspire youth—in the wrong direction.'

The record of this expedition would be ludicrous if it were not terrible. On the 18th of May 1856, that is, in winter, when the rain fell in torrents, and the cruel icy wind blew mercilessly, the friends first set foot on the Pampas, and for four days had to lie in wet clothes on the wet grass, finding the greatest difficulty in preserving their arms, on which their lives depended,

from injury; but, on the fifth day, the rain ceased, the sun dried their clothes, the plains of thick green grass spread out to the horizon in refreshing beauty, and they found the curious little animals which M. Guinnard calls 'viscachos,' but which are rightly named 'biscachos,' in time to replenish their store of provisions. He is not an observant traveller, and evidently nothing of a naturalist, and makes no mention of the inseparable attendant of these creatures, the biscacho owl. The journey involved, from the beginning, such trifles as intense cold, the utter destruction of the only pairs of shoes they severally possessed, the walking barefoot over ground bristling with sharp stones or thorns, sheltering in a hollow dug out of a river-bank with their knives, and being all but drowned by the sudden swelling of the river by the torrents of rain; finding their way through swirling waters, in thick darkness, and, having reached a point of safety, being detained there without food for three days, until they could cross the river. The Pampas passed, came a stretch of calcareous land, without a trace of animal life, water, or vegetation; hunger, fearful thirst, and fever were their companions in their pilgrimage over this place, from which they emerged into salt plains covered with pools, whose loathsome waters, tasting like copper, rested on beds of nauseous black mud, and round whose brink stood crowds of beautiful scarlet and white flamingoes. They neared starvation rapidly, eating earth on the 3d June and unknown roots, which produced terrible illness. They became delirious, cursed, threatened, and struck each other.

'Fatigued in mind and body,' says M. Guinnard, 'we had contented ourselves with a mere glance at the compass, the needle of which had rusted in the setting. My plan of our route had long ceased to be available, when, on the return of the sun, we perceived that we had been travelling in a wrong direction, making for the south-west, diametrically opposite to the point for which we intended to make.' Instead of skirting the Indian territory, they had completely entered it many days before. With what horror the terrible truth must have struck the forlorn wanderers, exhausted by variety of suffering, discouraged by the discovery that it had all been in vain, and their goal more distant than ever! They resolved to try and reach the mountains which they had seen in the distance, in an opposite direction; and succeeding in recrossing the river, after which they were detained forty-eight hours by a tempest, and on its subsidence, in seeking materials for a fire, found conclusive evidence of the vicinity of Indians, in the burned fields, which they had doubtless just abandoned, and presently saw a party of them hunting gamas. They had to endure three days of terrible suspense, crouched in a hole in the earth; but after that, hunger besieged them, and they were forced to yield. 'We ventured out,' says the author, 'to recommence our hunting, and recovered confidence and hope on succeeding in shooting a fine gama. I had already lifted it on my shoulder, when the Indians rushed as if by enchantment from all the hollows of the ground, and surrounded us with demonstrations of ferocious joy, uttering guttural cries, and brandishing their lances, locayos (balls), and lassoes. They were half-naked, mounted on spirited horses, which they managed with dexterity. Their robust bodies were bistre-coloured, their thick uncombed hair

hung over their faces, and daubs of glaring colour gave additional ferocity to their hideous features. The result of a struggle between us and this band could not be doubtful. We fired at the most advanced of our enemies, who fell, but his companions rode down on us in a body while we were reloading our arms. My comrade fell, pierced through and through with their spears, to rise no more. I had been pierced through the left forearm, in endeavouring to guard my chest, when I was struck on the head, and felled by one of their stone balls (*locayos*). The Indians were about to finish me, when one of them, thinking, doubtless, that a man so hard to kill would make a useful slave, opposed their intention. He stripped me completely, bound my hands behind my back, then placed me on a horse as bare as myself, tying me on tightly by the legs.'

The horrible journey which ensued, a renewal of the story of Mazeppa, is sufficiently painful to contemplate, though we decline to believe that it occupied five days, during which the captive resolutely refused food, which, in the shape of roots, his masters offered him. When they reached their camp, he was released, and, in unspeakable agony, wholly unpitied, he flung himself on the ground, while the women and children eyed him curiously and menacingly. He was reduced by hunger to extreme weakness, but his stomach rejected the raw horse-flesh on which the Indians lived, and he continued to subsist chiefly on roots. He was destined to three years' sojourn among these savages, and to accompany them in their wanderings, so that he acquired an acquaintance with the three distinct groups of population, each of which corresponds with a natural division of the soil, easily traced on the map. In the eastern zone, which runs from the Rio Salado to the Rio Colorado, live the Pampeans—seven tribes. The wooded region which extends between Lake Bevadero and Courou Lafquène, or the Black Lake, and all the water-courses running from this lake to the Rio Diamante, belong to the Mamouelches (wood-people)—eight tribes. Finally, from the Rio Colorado to the south of the Rio Negro, a narrow but deep river, as long as the Rhine or the Loire, extends the territory of the Patagonians—nine tribes, unsurpassable in brutality and degradation. The whole country is exceedingly beautiful and fertile, but the climate is very tempestuous and severe. M. Guinnard had fallen into the hands of the Poyuches, a not very numerous, and exceedingly poor tribe, who possess few cattle, and live by hunting the guanaco, nandows, and gamas. Their intelligence is limited, their cruelty shocking, and their superstition ludicrous. According to them, both north and south are unfavourable to them; the north is the point where the living disappear for ever, suddenly carried off by evil spirits coming from the south. They fear death very much, and fancy they prolong their existence by sleeping with their heads either to the east or west. They bathe every day in all seasons, but otherwise are sensitive to weather, and not to be tempted out of their huts in the 'pampero,' even by hunger, disgusting gluttons as they are. They suffer from the most abject superstitious fear, and have no notion of a beneficent deity. With these wretched creatures, M. Guinnard remained only a few months, during which he was totally disabled from work of any kind, and at their conclu-

sion, he was sold, with many lying representations of his value as a slave, to some Puelches, who visited the Poyuches' camp, and taken by them to their own territory, where he underwent the most brutal treatment when they discovered his ignorance of horsemanship. The men are tall and well proportioned, and their chief passions are hunting and drunkenness. The prisoner applied himself, in self-defence, to learning how to manage horses, and became expert in the use of the lasso and locayo, which are indispensable to all who venture into the American desert. The Puelches, though horribly cruel, are industrious and intelligent, and the caparisoning of their horses is high art. Their food consists of horse-flesh and gamas, also of the flesh of ostriches; the choicest morsels they eat are the liver, lungs, and kidneys, raw, soaked in hot, or salted and curdled blood—for they know the use of salt. They treated the unfortunate prisoner with persistent barbarity, never permitting him to have any bed but the ground, or other shelter than the sky. They inhabit the latitudes between the Negro and Colorado rivers, which they rarely cross. The eastern side is composed of fertile plains, on which are lakes of excellent water, abounding in fish. They trade with, and are visited by all the other tribes, so that M. Guinnard had an opportunity of observing their characteristics. This visiting is as ceremonious an affair as among more civilised communities, and probably as wearisome to all parties.

The Puelches sold M. Guinnard to another tribe, of whose manner of existence he gives the following interesting description: 'The Tchéouelches appear to be even less accessible to pain than the other nomads. They dress their own wounds with the greatest coolness, not excepting those of the gravest kind, without uttering sound of complaint. They have something more human in their manner than the Puelches. Their strength greatly exceeds that of Europeans. I have seen these men easily catch with the lasso an untamed horse, and stop it suddenly in its unbridled career, resisting, unaided, the terrible shock of the struggling animal, and maintaining their position until the moment when, at the point of strangulation, it fell to the ground; but I have never remarked that, in those exercises, their muscles were more apparent than in a normal state. The physical organisation of the Indians is, moreover, greatly superior to that of civilised man; they bear with the greatest facility prolonged privations during the journeys of two or three months, which they make almost without resting, galloping day and night. The greatest gluttons place between the skins they use as saddles a small quantity of meat, cut into thin slices, which they eat with a mixture of horse and bullock fat. The poorest carry a sort of loaf of salt, baked in dung-ash, after having been ground, and kneaded with sweet herbs, which they lick only from time to time, as they experience hunger or thirst.'

The Patagonian tribes (proper) occupy a beautiful country, and, though inconceivably brutal, are very intelligent. Guinnard was not so stuftified by suffering as to be unable to enjoy the variety and beauty of the landscapes through which he was dragged by his inhuman captors, who beat and starved him, threatened and insulted him, almost without intermission. He was sold by them to the Pampeans, or Pampas Indians;

and, on consulting the map, it will be seen that this change brought him nearer to the boundaries of comparative civilisation. The Pampeans are less in stature than the other tribes, their skins are fine and delicate, their hair abundant, their teeth beautiful, but their features hideous. Their tents and their persons are kept remarkably clean; but, nevertheless, they, like all other Indians, are covered with vermin. Their women are dwarfish, frightfully ugly, wonderfully strong, and attired very picturesquely. They are active, useful, and intelligent, and, on the whole, not ill-treated. The habitual cruelty of this tribe is most revolting. It was sufficiently dreadful to witness the habitual barbarity of men and women to animals, and men; but to see the horrors inflicted on the female captives taken in the razzias was almost beyond the endurance of M. Guinnard, who was entirely helpless, and could not have interfered without bringing the certain penalty of a horrible death upon himself and them. In the confusion resulting from a fierce battle of the tribe with the Argentines, he managed to escape, not to freedom yet, but to another tribe, the Mamoneches, less nomadic, and to which he thenceforth belonged, and by whom he was not ill-treated.

M. Guinnard's rescue from this frightful slavery was proximately caused by the alliance formed by Don José d'Urquiza with the Indian chief Calfoucrah. The Frenchman was employed to write the chief's letters; and he thus gained a knowledge of localities and the position of civilised stations, and conceived a hope and project of escape. The return of Calfoucrah's ambassadors laden with barrels of brandy, was the signal for an orgie, in which the whole tribe, men, women, and children, instantly engaged. M. Guinnard knew they would remain in a state of intoxication for some time, and made up his mind to risk his life on the 'odds' he had in his favour. He took three of the cacique's best horses, a lasso, and a *boleadora* (stone ball), led the horses until he was out of sight of the wallowing mass of drunkenness and abomination, and then mounting one, and driving the others, commenced his perilous flight. He never knew whether there was any pursuit, save that of a dog who came up with him, to his great alarm, but who had followed him unperceived from the first. In thirteen days, and with one horse and his dog still alive, he reached the little village, Rio Quinto, and was taken into the house of a worthy Spanish family, in a state of utter exhaustion. On his recovery, he went to the beautiful city of Mendoza, tenanted by 'the happiest, gentlest, and most hospitable population of the American continent,' which was utterly destroyed by an earthquake on the 19th March 1861.

D U L C I E ' S D E L U S I O N .

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

ON three mornings in every week, Dulcie O'Connor went to the Place St Michel, to give lessons to the daughters of a certain Madame de Pradières. The drive in the omnibus, with its motley cargo of working-people, was one of the small trials which Dulcie most disliked, but it was not to be avoided. Madame de Pradières required her to arrive at an early hour, and, if she had had time, she would not have had strength to walk the distance. Her

custom was to take the furthermost seat in the vehicle, which secured her from a neighbour on one side, and enabled her to watch the steady trot of the plump and prosperous Percherons, animals for whom she entertained a particular regard. It chanced that one morning, when the spring was in its glory, she arrived several minutes before the omnibus first on the rank started, and had hardly seated herself, when the place opposite to her was filled by an individual who differed very much from its general occupants. This was a young man, evidently a gentleman—his dress and appearance alike bore witness to that fact—tall and elegant of figure, and with a singularly handsome face, unlike any of the French types with which Dulcie was acquainted. He had clear gray eyes, a pale complexion, crisply-curling, light-brown hair, and that peculiar easy, and yet proud air, which we are accustomed to consider exclusively English and aristocratic. But Dulcie's *vis-à-vis*, at whom she could not forbear from occasionally stealing a sly glance, unobserved, behind her sheltering veil, was neither an Englishman nor an aristocrat. He did not notice Dulcie, to all appearance, but occupied himself from time to time with a very natty note-book, and descended from the omnibus a little short of her destination. 'What an elegant-looking young man,' she thought. 'How well he walks; and how politely he lifts his hat to the old lady who has just pushed him off the crossing!' And then Dulcie lost sight of him, and turned her attention once more to the Percherons.

The next day but one, Dulcie and the handsome young man, who was such an unlikely passenger for so *bourgeois* a conveyance, again travelled in the same omnibus at the same hour, and it was with some confusion that Dulcie recognised him. Had she really been wondering whether such a meeting was possible? Had she really been thinking of the handsome, clear-cut face, the gray eyes, and the curling hair, and trying to remember what painting or engraving it was that he was so like? This time, Dulcie did not pass unobserved; and she was aware of the fact. Without the least rudeness, without anything in the smallest degree contrary to the proprieties, the handsome young gentleman managed to let the handsome young lady know that he had noted their previous meeting, and that he recognised her. Again he occupied himself with his note-book, but this time there were furtive glances from behind its covers, and this time he did not descend from the omnibus short of Dulcie's destination, but remained after she had been deposited, and carefully observed the house which she entered.

'What! Madame de Pradières' house,' muttered the handsome young gentleman. 'She goes there, then, this English angel, with the face to ravish one with delight, and the toilet to make one shudder. I am well fallen.'

The establishment of Madame de Pradières was admirably mounted, with as much liberality and as much taste as if the ennobling particle were not in the least doubtful—and her dearest friends were apt to smile at it; but it was not secure from accidental overturnings of its habits and customs. One of these uninsured accidents had occurred on this very day. Madame de Pradières' daughters enjoyed the perpetual *surveillance* of a governess of their own nation; but Mademoiselle

Martel had fallen ill, and on the peculiarly inappropriate occasion of the first lesson her pupils were to receive from a drawing-master of some eminence and considerable fashion ; at which lesson she was, of course, to preside. This occurrence led to an irruption of Madame de Pradières into the schoolroom, where Dulcie and her pupils were at work over a selection from English essayists, on which absorbing study she intruded like a very brilliant butterfly, off whose delicate downiness time has rubbed surprisingly few of the microscopic feathers, and whose frivolity time has signally failed to weight. She had come, in real distress, to throw herself on the kindness, the generosity, of Mademoiselle O'Connor. Were her engagements such as to permit her to remain with the young ladies during their drawing-lesson ? Dulcie had the time to spare, and assented ; and Madame de Pradières fluttered out again, her maternal heart at rest. Thus it happened that when the drawing-master was ushered into the schoolroom, he and Dulcie recognised one another, she with a confused and conscious blush, and he with a smile of unembarrassed pleasure.

In point of age and appearance, Dulcie might have been supposed to require a chaperon as much as the young ladies under her charge ; but being only a governess, the ordinary rules did not apply to her. With eager interest, she watched the progress of the lesson, with ardent admiration for an art of which she was entirely ignorant, and with an innocent, unconcealed sympathy with the artist, which his deferential manner, and the easy graceful way in which he referred to her, tended to increase. When he had taken his leave, and Dulcie, in her turn, wended her way home, she felt strangely light of heart, almost happy, and certainly different to what she had been since her mother's death. On the next day but one, the drawing-master and Dulcie met again, and conversed together during their omnibus journey, and as he left her at Madame de Pradières' door, M. Léon Evreux said : 'In two hours, doubtless, we shall meet. Mademoiselle Martel cannot be so inconsiderate as to have recovered.'

Dulcie went into the house trembling lest her services should not be required, but reflecting that, in case of the worst, she should certainly see him on Friday, because he had told her that he lived out in her quarter, and was in the habit of going into town by the *Glacière* omnibus every day. What had he told her beside ? How much had she learned about this man, of whom she had begun to think as a being quite removed from the rest of the world, who was beginning, by the mere idea of him, to turn her solitude into a peopled dream, and thinking of whom she wondered whether she could really be the same person to whom life had been so dreary and so empty a few days ago ? Dulcie was in for the inevitable malady, in a severe form, and there was no one to take note of the symptoms and attempt to check them. He had told her that he was English on his mother's side, an orphan like herself, and, like her, obliged to earn his own livelihood. But here Dulcie was aware the resemblance ceased, for he had the advantage of possessing a decided, recognised, and remunerative talent. He was an artist, with the successes and the glories of an artist's career before him ; she was a teacher, with only the hopeless mediocrity and obscurity of a

teacher's lot before *her*. Dulcie did not ask herself why she should be drawing parallels between her life and that of this particular stranger, rather than any one else in the wide world.

Her fears were not realised ; once more she was requested to preside over the drawing-lesson ; and indeed Mademoiselle Martel was considerate enough to continue ill for a fortnight, during which Dulcie and the drawing-master met with regularity, and at the end of which the girl was as irretrievably, as rapturously in love with the young man, of whom she knew nothing but what he chose to tell her, as ever woman was. She had told her humble little story to Léon Evreux, and one day—a bright and blissful one to Dulcie—he had met her as she was trudging home on foot, and accompanied her, after some slight preliminary explanation, or rather excuse, of having business in the vicinity, to the corner of the remote blank-walled street. And then, as he took leave of her, with some embarrassment, at a little distance from the gate, Dulcie noticed that he glanced hurriedly up and down, as if to see whether he could be observed, and fancied for a moment that he had been about to tell her something, but had changed his mind. Reflecting on this afterwards, Dulcie saw in it a proof of the delicacy of mind, the nobility of nature, which rendered him superior to all the other men in the world. Perhaps it was not quite the correct thing that he should have walked home with her, and yet how natural it was, and what a happy walk it had been ; and he had been anxious lest *she* should be seen, and subjected to unkind or embarrassing comment.

She did not ask herself what it was she wished or hoped. She was quite innocent of wrong and ignorant of danger in her cherished dream. The three days in each week on which she saw him were the only days in which she really lived ; she dragged through the others as well as she could. It was not very well, and soon her preoccupied mind began to tell upon her method of doing her business. The Demoiselles de Pradières were the only ones among poor Dulcie's pupils who had not to suffer for the influence of the handsome stranger upon her life, for the fact that she met him at their mother's house made her regard them with an almost grateful interest. The other girls whom she taught became eminently distasteful to her ; her attention wandered from them, the instincts of her youth began to assert themselves ; so did its coquettices. She looked with helpless disgust at her worn boots, her shabby gloves, the monotonous unadorned form of her attire, and with irresistible longing at the little bits of finery worn by others, or displayed in the shop-windows, a few of which would have made such a difference to her.

What a dull, dowdy-looking creature she was, Dulcie thought ; how could he ever see anything to admire in *her* ? And yet he did admire her ; she felt quite sure of that : his looks, his manner, the tone of his voice in speaking to her, told her that. Did he love her ? Even to Dulcie's inexperience, this was a very different question. At the end of a month, when they had met with unvarying regularity three times a week, she could not answer it with certainty. It had never occurred to Dulcie's mother to instruct her child in the characteristics of French customs respecting love and marriage ; and Dulcie would have had no idea

that love in a cottage, to be maintained by the combined industry of herself and the handsome stranger, should he deign to love her, would present itself to every individual inhabiting her little world in an aspect at once impossible and preposterous. But she had not gone so far as to form such a vision. Léon Evreux had looked and implied love, but he had said no word to her which she could have repeated to another, and that other accepted it as an avowal. Nevertheless, Dulcie was quite happy, though as yet only timidly hopeful.

The state of the young girl's mind expressed itself by certain external tokens which Madame Constant was not slow to observe. Dulcie gave her less and less trouble in preparing her poor little meals, and ate less of them, such as they were. Their quality was still further reduced; and Madame Constant began to wonder whether Dulcie had lost a pupil or two. But there was no change in her hours of going out and coming in; and Madame Constant noticed certain little alterations in her dress, trifling smartnesses, worn only on certain days of the week, a fact which the quick eye of the Frenchwoman did not fail to observe, and thus the diversion of Dulcie's little earnings from the prosaic purpose of food was explained. She shut herself up in her bare little room more resolutely than ever, seldom pausing now for a little kindly chat with her ever-knitting friend, or for the exchange of a few words with such of the locataires as found the weather sufficiently fine to have recourse to the benches.

'She will be ill, if she goes on like this,' thought Madame Constant as she made some coffee, which, with a slice of bread and a piece of sausage, was to constitute Dulcie's dinner, she having breakfasted on bread and coffee. 'She has not had soup or freshly cooked meat for a week; and as for wine, I don't know when she drank a thimbleful. I wish Madame Dervaux was at home, and I would speak to her about it. I don't like the look of it at all.'

But wishing would not bring Madame Dervaux home from a visit to some of her family in Normandy, and there was no one else to speak to about Dulcie. To her remonstrances, the girl herself turned a deaf ear.

'I cannot afford it,' she would say; 'it is enough for me. I am young and strong; I don't need dainty things to eat.'

'True; but Mademoiselle needs nourishing food.'

'The food I take nourishes me enough. You know I must not make debts I could have no hope of paying. Do not fret about me, my dear Madame Constant.'

A few days after Dulcie had thus silenced Madame Constant's remonstrances, a great disappointment befell her. It was on one of her glorious golden days, which was to have been bright with the lustre of a drive in an omnibus with the hero of her fancy and lord of her heart, and of two precious hours afterwards passed in his presence. Dulcie was in high spirits and in unusual beauty. All the little smartnesses which Madame Constant had noticed with displeasure were effectively displayed in her modest and becoming attire. She set forth gaily; and at the bureau of the omnibus she met Léon Evreux, who was quite evidently waiting for her. The colour rose in the girl's cheeks, the light sparkled in her

eyes, as she shyly returned his eager salutation; and they were soon seated, and the omnibus—an unromantic mode of conveyance, but one which carries a great many love-stories about—was proceeding at a rate inverse to their wishes. There were very few passengers that morning, but among them was one who knew Dulcie, though Dulcie did not recognise her. This was Susan Cooke, the much-enduring Susanne of Madame Constant's anecdotes concerning her favourite aversion, Miss Miranda Prinsep. The absorption of Dulcie in her companion's conversation was complete: she saw no one; she would have been incapable of hearing any one but him; and Susan Cooke was there, carefully taking note of it all, and wishing more ardently than ever that her education had included a knowledge of the French tongue. At the accustomed place, they descended. Léon Evreux left Dulcie at the *porte cochère* of Madame de Pradières' hôtel, with an expression of impatience at the interval which must intervene between that moment and the auspicious drawing-lesson, and a look which said much more than his words. Dulcie ran lightly across the *cour* to the great glass door, flanked by orange trees, which gave admittance to the apartment of Madame de Pradières, and in another minute was smilingly greeting her pupils. The young ladies' *bonne*, having seen them arranged in order of study, withdrew, after having informed Dulcie, with the compliments of Madame, that the presence of Mademoiselle at the drawing-lesson on that day would not be required. Mademoiselle Martel was, happily, sufficiently well to resume her duties. Down went the quicksilver in Dulcie's glass. How she hated Mademoiselle Martel, and envied her pupils! To those young victims, no lesson had ever appeared so dull, so slow, so endless. With what lingering regret did Dulcie take her leave, and walk away from the *porte cochère*, hoping that, at least, she should meet him going to the house. But she did not meet him, and, with all her youthful folly and keen disappointment, Dulcie had too much self-respect to loiter about with the hope of doing so. Sadly she went home, and sadly passed the long spring evening, moping and musing by her little window, wondering why she should feel so overpowered with fatigue, and full of gloomy forebodings.

Dulcie looked pale and weary when she passed through the *porterie* on the following day; and Susan Cooke, who was there, with a commission from her mistress, to arrange with Madame Constant for a general cleaning of the perennially spotlessly clean apartments occupied by Miss Miranda, observed her appearance, and mentally contrasted it with her animated, pretty looks, when she had seen her talking so gaily and listening so attentively to M. Léon Evreux. Susan could speak a few sentences in French, learned from a vocabulary, at the imperious instance of Miss Miranda. Madame Constant knew of English just four phrases, inclusive of 'Yes' and 'No.' The third was: 'Not at home'; the fourth: 'I will attend to it'; and, aided by these slender resources, she contrived to get on wonderfully well. But they were not favourable to gossiping with the English locataires' English servant; and, accordingly, though each was curious about Dulcie, neither could impart her sentiments to the other. Miss Miranda's message, written in her crabbed French, and

equally crabbed hand, lay on the table, and Madame Constant was deciphering it with difficulty.

'Hold ! Mademoiselle would have the goodness to read it, I am sure,' said Madame Constant, just as Dulcie's foot had reached the threshold. 'I am terribly intrigued to know what she would—this mess.'

Dulcie turned back, and went up to the table. Madame Constant handed her the memorandum. It was written on a slip torn off a half-sheet of note-paper, and there was a line of writing, evidently the signature to a letter, on the other side. Dulcie read out a complicated list of requirements, chiefly of the cleansing apparatus order, and, in returning the paper to Madame Constant, caught sight of the name on the back. It was Léon Evreux.

FLOATING GUN-CARRIAGES.

THIS name may, we think, with some propriety be applied to the class of vessels which are likely to constitute the *small fry* of our navy in the future, seeing that each of them is designed for the purpose of carrying and fighting one large gun, and in the working of this gun, some of the operations usually performed by moving the carriage, are in these vessels accomplished by moving the whole boat. The problem which their designer appears to have proposed to himself was, how to float a very heavy gun in the handiest and cheapest way, and in the smallest possible boat; and the result is, that an eighteen-ton gun is carried and fought on board a steamboat a little longer than a common river-arge, and drawing only six feet of water; and that for an expenditure of less than eight thousand pounds, a vessel is obtained which can throw a projectile equal in weight to the broadside of an old-fashioned corvette. Indeed, one of them would be an efficient protection for a river or roadstead against any unarmoured cruiser, and would inflict a severe stung upon an iron-clad which should unwarily enter her domain. Each boat has engines for her propulsion by means of two screw propellers, cabins for the one officer and twenty-one men who constitute her crew, and magazines and storerooms; but the important feature to which all the rest is subordinated is the one large gun resting upon a movable platform, very strong, and capable of being lowered into a part of the hold fitted to receive it. This place is partitioned off from the rest of the hold, and made water-tight. When the gun and its platform are lowered into it, the top is covered over with iron plates, over which a water-proof canvas is thrown, and fastened down in such a manner that the water cannot get in. The centre of gravity of the boat is thus lowered; and when all holes in the deck are closely covered up, she is fit to encounter such bad weather as she is likely to be exposed to. When it is required to fire the gun, the canvas is thrown aside, and the plates are taken off, and are, by an ingenious contrivance, so placed as to form a complete cover from rifle-shot for the man at the wheel, which is situated just abaft the gun, so that the motions of both gun and boat may be directed by the same officer.

Next, the gun is thus raised: If we look at the portion of the hold, or *well*, as it is called, where the gun is stowed away, we shall see that it is an oblong box in the forepart of the

ship, in the middle of the deck, of which it occupies rather more than half the width. At intervals, round the sides of the box, we see vertical iron ribs or girders, each projecting about one foot from the sides of the box. These are called the guides; pieces of brass attached to the platform clasp them, and thus the platform is prevented from swaying from side to side as the ship rolls while it is being lifted. We should also notice four iron vertical shafts or pillars rising nearly to the height of the deck, each about two or three feet from a corner of the well, and a foot or so from its side. These shafts thus standing alone are screws fitting into and passing through blocks of brass in the platform, so that when they are turned round in one direction, the platform rises; and when the screw is turned backwards, the platform falls. These vertical shafts are turned by means of horizontal shafts, not visible, being below the floor of the well, working into them by an arrangement of cog-wheels, the horizontal shaft being set in motion by a steam-engine contained in the portion of the hold just abaft the gun-well. They can also be turned, and the gun raised, by an application of manual labour, but, of course, much more slowly. The engine being set in motion, and the upright shafts set revolving, the gun is raised, the brass clasps on the *guides* steadyng the motion, and preventing any jamming against the sides of the well. When the gun is raised to its proper height, by an ingenious arrangement, iron bolts are simultaneously shot out from underneath the platform into holes provided for the purpose in the guides. These bolts are of sufficient strength to support the weight of the gun and the additional strain caused by its being fired. The weight of the gun and its platform being now supported independently of the pillars, they are turned a trifle back, so that the machinery used in raising the weight may not be damaged by the concussion caused by discharging the gun. The gun, which, as we have said, weighs eighteen tons, throws an elongated shot weighing about four hundred pounds, or a spherical shot of about one hundred and fifty pounds. The recoil is checked, as is usually the case with large guns fired in a limited space, by an arrangement for increasing friction called a *compressor*. Thus the platform is much smaller than would necessarily be the case if the gun were allowed to recoil freely, a smaller portion of the deck is taken up, and the labour and time of bringing the gun back to its firing position being also diminished.

As it would not be practicable to place the gun so near the head of the boat that it could be fired out of a port in the bow, seeing that it would sink the boat's head so low in the water, it is fired over the fore-part of the deck, which is made lower than the rest of the deck, to admit of this arrangement. Thus there is in the fore-part of the vessel a piece of deck just above the water, which washes freely over it, and formed of iron plates, so that it cannot be ignited by the fire of the gun. From the after-end of this piece of deck rise the bulwarks, shewing three ports for the gun to be fired from—one in the middle, and one on each side. It is not intended usually to fire the gun from the side-ports; any change of direction required is to be obtained by moving the boat. The bulwarks all round the portion of the deck occupied by the men who work the gun, are of iron, and are high enough to protect

the men from rifle-fire. The man at the wheel is, as we have mentioned, similarly protected.

All through the boats, the principle of dividing the hold into water-tight compartments is carried out, thus materially diminishing the danger which would be produced by a hole below the water. The safety of these boats, however, is their smallness: they fight with only their bow presented to the enemy, and are so small, and so little above the water, that in a rough sea it would be difficult to hit them. They are propelled by twin screws at the rate of eight and a half knots (nearly ten miles) per hour. In May 1871, there were twelve of them afloat; of these, the *Plucky* and *Stanch* are smaller than the others, and have been afloat a year or two. The remainder were only commenced last autumn—the *Comet* and *Blazer* at her Majesty's dockyard at Portsmouth; the *Snake* and *Scourge* at Chatham; the *Bustard* and *Kite* by Messrs Napier and Sons, Glasgow; the *Mastiff* and *Bloodhound*, by Messrs Mitchell & Co., Newcastle; and the *Arrow* and *Bonetta* by Messrs Rennie of Greenwich. Some others are to be commenced this year, and it is probable that this class of vessels will be largely represented yearly in the list of additions to the British navy. One great value of the invention is, that a large number of these gunboats could be built in a very short time. Any iron shipbuilder would have machinery enough to enable him to undertake the building of one or more of such small and simply constructed vessels.

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER XIII.—A GHOSTLY WALK.

'WHERE is Cecil?' asked my father impatiently, as I re-entered the drawing-room. 'I hope he does not refuse to see Mr Bourne.'

'It is not that,' said I. 'He is not to be found. He has left the house.'

'Left the house!' repeated both my father and the rector; and they looked at one another with the same thought in their minds, as I could well perceive, which had already occurred to myself.

'But where is he gone to? Has he left no message? Have you no idea, Fred, what has become of him?' There was not only perplexity in my father's tones, but positive alarm.

'There is only one place that I can think of,' replied I, with hesitation: 'he may have gone to Wayford.'

'I trust not, indeed,' observed the rector hastily. 'Ruth Waller has gone home to her cottage. It would be a most improper proceeding.'

'Go and see, Fred,' said my father gravely. Impropriety had become, it was evident, a secondary consideration in his eyes. 'Tell the servants that they may retire. I will sit up for you myself.'

'Had you not better go, or I, and bring him back?' suggested the rector.

'No,' said my father curtly. 'I rely upon Fred's judgment and strength of character.'

This was gratifying, and more especially so since I knew that my father had hitherto been not well pleased by my conduct with respect to Cecil and

the girl; but I must say I did not welcome the responsibility. If Ruth had been a ward in Chancery, and I had been furnished with a decree of that high court, launched against her contumacious swain, I should have had my doubts of the success of my enterprise; but as it was, what arguments had I to use beside those which had already proved fruitless? What hold had I upon him? I was well acquainted with my cousin's impulsive character, and a double source of apprehension now possessed me; it suddenly struck me that they had gone off together. Cecil was always plentifully supplied with money; and finding this beautiful creature alone, and in distress, I could easily imagine that, blinded by passion, and eager to escape from a locality which recent events had rendered hateful to him— But no; I could not wrong him thus, even in thought; it would be time enough to think ill of my friend when he had proved himself in fault. The next minute, I had snatched my cap from its peg, and was on the moonlit road.

I ran at that swift but steady pace that is meant to last, and which admits of the mind communing with itself as well as of taking impressions from without; and in order to avoid the risk of meeting any one who might inquire my errand (though this was not likely, for our folks at Gatcombe kept very early hours), I took the terrace way. Not sound but that of my own panting breath disturbed the midnight silence. Nature, asleep, lay stretched before me for many a mile, in all her loveliness, lit up by the pale light of the moon. Each field and farm stood out distinct and clear, most recognisable, yet not familiar; for a landscape, under such circumstances, resembles its own self at noonday only as some fair virgin, newly dead, resembles herself in life. The brightness and the glory are fled, but a spiritual beauty, born of calm and peace, reigns in their place. Alas, thought I, how soon the parallel ends; for the world will wake to life and light again, while the beauty of the dead will fade and change to unutterable horrors. Then, with a flash, my errant thought reverted to Richard Waller and his terrible fate, the scene of which I was approaching. It was more than a mile ahead; but the hearselike canopy of firs that overhung it was distinctly visible, looking blacker even than it was wont to do by daylight. My lonely path had already led me by many a gaping cave which had proved, at one time or another, the sepulchre of a living man; but with such catastrophes I had been only acquainted by report. The Wayford pit, which I had to pass on my road to Ruth's cottage, had given up its dead before my own eyes. A vague terror suddenly beset me, and shook my knees as I ran on. Should I once stop even for a moment, I felt that it would have overcome me utterly. My nerves were naturally strong enough, but the events of the last few days had unstrung them; and perhaps I had cultivated my imagination somewhat to the neglect of my reasoning powers. At all events, I felt a strong inclination to descend the sand-cliff at once, and take the lower road. On the other hand, though there was none to see me, I experienced a sense of shame at such a proceeding. I debated the matter with myself, thought arguing with thought within me, as it was often wont to do. The case is not uncommon, perhaps, with those who have lived

long without companions of their own age ; but it is no sign of a healthy mental condition. Had my father, at my age, been in my place, he would, I know, have given way to no such weakness for an instant, and that idea gave me courage. The Wrays had never been given to fear of any sort ; my uncle had been bold to audacity ; even Aunt Ben would have approached yonder wood, if duty had called her so to do, as fearlessly as she would have gone to her garden. Was I, then, to be the first coward of my race ? I ran on at increased speed. Perhaps it was *that* which caused my heart to beat so loudly that I could hear it as I reached the pine-wood. The white terrace was flooded with the moonlight, and made the grove intensely black. A whisper ran through its dark plumes, which I had heard a thousand times, but it had never said : 'Hush, hush ! the dead is here,' as it did now.

In the front of each cave was a little covered hut in which the scythe-stones were wont sometimes to be roughly chipped, before they were taken home to undergo the more delicate operations. I had often seen Richard Waller sitting in the one to which I was now drawing near, and heard his shrill, yearning cough—and I heard it now. Yes, with the sweat-drops on my forehead, with every vein in my body filled to bursting, and my heart beating like a steam-engine, I stopped and listened to it now. It was full a minute before the sound was repeated, and then I recognised it for what it really was, the swaying of a tree-top in some breeze of the upper air. I blushed from chin to brow as I thought how my father, with his faith in my 'strength of character,' would have blushed for me, and then walked resolutely on. I no longer ran ; I was resolved to punish myself for having given way to such abject weakness. I would not even avert my eyes from the pit-mouth as I passed by, nor did I. The hut I have spoken of had hitherto had its back towards me, but I came now into full view of it ; and, horror of horrors ! there sat in it a human figure, huddled up and cramped together, just as I had seen that of Richard Waller when he was taken dead out of the cave—the head was drooped upon the hands, and the elbows resting on the knees ; and 'Hush, hush ! the dead is here,' said the trees again.

In my last experience, I thought I had undergone all that fear could inflict, but I had been mistaken ; that had been but panic, whereas this was veritable terror, unspeakable, unimaginable, and yet a thousand times intensified by the imagination. The self-same sight that Eliphaz, the Temanite, beheld in his dream, seemed now to be before me in reality ; and 'the hair of my flesh stood up,' like his, and my bones shook. If the Thing had moved or cried out, I verily believe my wits would have fled for ever, if not my life ; but it remained quite still, and I, as still, stood staring at it. I cannot express the relief to my mind, and also my grateful sense of that relief, when the fact was presently made apparent to me that it was no ghost, but my Cousin Cecil. He might have been dead himself, however, for any sign of life he gave ; and, remembering my own terrors, I took care to make no sudden exclamation, but called him by his name in a low voice. As it turned out, however, I need have taken no such precaution, for he answered : 'Yes, it is I,' in a sad and unconcerned voice, with neither start nor expression of astonishment at seeing me.

'My father sent me for you,' said I ; 'he is distressed and alarmed at your absence, and so are we all.'

'Ah,' replied he wearily, 'it is late, I suppose. I will come home.'

'But, my dear Cecil,' said I, approaching him, and taking his hand, which was very hot and feverish, 'why are you here at all at such a time ?'

'Why not ?' said he. 'Is it not said that murderers have an irrepressible desire to revisit the scene of their crimes ?'

'But you are not Richard Waller's murderer,' said I soothingly.

'No,' answered he firmly ; 'but I desire above all things to meet with the man who was.'

'You are not serious, Cecil, or if so, you are not yourself,' observed I gravely.

'No, that is true, he answered. Then, with a deep sigh, but with all his old kindness of tone, he added : 'Ah, Fred., this day has done for your friend and kinsman ; my life is going out altogether : in this foul breath of report, it can no more exist than can a candle-flame in a damp cave.'

'The breath of a fool,' said I, 'is of less account than the breeze among those firs. How can you take such rubbish to heart !'

'Nay, Batty spoke the truth in the main, Fred.,' answered my cousin solemnly. 'It is useless to discredit him. Even Rue thinks that.'

'Have you seen her since—since the magistrates' meeting ?'

'Yes ; just now : she parted from me here not half an hour ago. I called at the Rectory to see her ; but Mr Bourne had turned her out of doors, for disbelieving that I had tried to kill her brother, and she had gone home. She is at the cottage yonder, all alone.'

'And you followed her thither ?'

'Yes,' said he, observing, perhaps, some dryness in the tone of the inquiry. 'What then ?'

'Nothing, my dear Cecil, only, since you seem so nervously sensitive to the ravings of a poor natural, it surprises me that you should have exposed yourself and Ruth, by such an act of imprudence, to be talked about by the whole village.'

'I was obliged to see her, Fred. ; I was indeed. But I did not stay beneath her roof ; perhaps I dared not ; at all events, I brought her here—here, where her brother was murdered but a week ago, and where she herself, by a miracle, was saved from death. It is not a spot, you will allow, for love-passages. Yet, here we first plighted troth.' He looked about him in a pitiful sad way, as though the girl herself had been dead, and only her memory associated with the scene. 'Well, she loves me still, notwithstanding what Batty has said ; and I verily believe, had I pressed her to do so, would have fled with me this very night.'

It was on the tip of my tongue to say I did not doubt that in the least, for, indeed, I did not. My heart, perhaps, was somewhat hardened against the girl who had been the cause of so much trouble to us all ; and, moreover, though my cousin was so dear in my own eyes, I did not think him one likely to have inspired a disinterested affection in those of Ruth. I nodded gravely, and he went on.

'She loves me dearly, Fred., and I believe for my own sake,' said he piteously, as though perceiving my thought. 'And I, oh ! I never loved her as now, when we are parted perhaps for ever !'

He sat down again on the bench, from which he

had risen in his passionate excitement, and buried his face in his hands.

'Parted for ever?' repeated I, in wondering tones.

'Of course,' said he simply. 'How can it be otherwise, whilst this monstrous charge hangs over me; and who can tell if it will ever be removed? Do you suppose that while this shadow of suspicion lingers, that I would marry Richard Waller's sister; and it may linger long, perhaps for ever! If poor Batty sticks to his story, as I think he will do, this horrible affair, whether he be right or wrong, may remain a mystery for ever; and if it does, so help me heaven—But there, I have already sworn it to her, on this spot, where the blood of her brother cries out for vengeance. I will drag out my days alone; for I am alone, when Rue is absent.'

To one who did not know my cousin, or only saw in him a youth of twenty, impulsive, and perplexed by grievous trouble, these would have seemed but wild and wandering words; but to me they were both sad and serious. If the cloud that hung over Richard Waller's fate should never be dispelled by the rays of truth, I felt that it was only too likely to darken Cecil's life for many a day; but, on the other hand, it seemed almost certain that it would be dispelled. Few cases that are sifted in a criminal court leave much that is unaccountable behind, and I had good hope of the coming trial not only putting Cecil's innocence beyond a doubt—for that was within my own power to do—but of fixing the crime upon the real offender.

'My dear Cecil,' said I assuringly, 'in two days' time, you will, I both hope and believe, be wholly free from these forebodings; you are cheerless and dispirited now, as you well may be. This spot itself, with its melancholy associations, is sufficient to depress anybody's spirits. Let us come home. My father told me that he should sit up for us.'

'I am sorry he is doing that,' said Cecil, rising, and immediately moving homewards, 'and very sorry, believe me, to be giving trouble and sorrow to those from whom I have received such unmerited kindness. It is very poor repayment, Fred.'

'My dear Cecil,' interrupted I, 'such words, I am sure, would distress my father much more than any trouble you may have caused him from a matter beyond your own control; for we know that Love is such, which

Rushes on one like a mighty stream,
And bears one in a moment far from shore.

I have heard my father himself repeat those lines as though he had once experienced what he had quoted, and yet he calls himself a philosopher. You might say with his favourite Chamberlayne—

Is't a sin to be
Born high, that robs me of my liberty?
or ask, with Massinger, why

Riches, with other men
Esteemed a blessing, is to you a curse?

We may differ from our friend in the choice of the object of his affections, but it would be folly to blame him. We do not do that even when love is unrequited.'

'At all events we should not,' said Cecil gravely; 'and yet when women place their love where it is not reciprocated, they are both blamed and scorned.'

'Not by those whose blame or scorn is worth

a farthing,' said I, pleased to win my companion, even for a little, from his private grief; 'for women's love is, after all, a more engrossing passion than ours.

Poor love is lost in men's capacious minds,
In theirs it fills up all the room it finds.

You must excuse my old tags and scraps, Cecil,' said I, laughing; 'you know that I have learned that "damnably trick of iteration" from my father.'

'I know it,' said my cousin, sighing; 'and you have learned much else that is better of him also. Ah, Fred., of us two cousins, though I have heard myself called the more fortunate, it was you who were to be envied, and not I, even before this blow fell on me. To have had such a father as you have, is a better lot than to have inherited all the wealth of the Indies!—But we were talking of unrequited love in woman—is your modesty, Fred., so great, that you are unaware that you yourself are the object of such affection ?'

I knew at once that my cousin was referring to his sister, though, certainly, had it not been for Lady Repton, I should not have known it. But how in honour could I confess it?

'I assure you,' said I, laughing, 'that the lady in question, whoever she may be, has never breathed one word of hopeless passion in my ear.'

'Because she knows it would be useless,' returned he quietly. 'I could not have blamed you for your preference for Eleanor, even if you had not known and loved her before you saw my sister. Jane is too much like myself to inspire love.'

'You have no right to speak of any woman in that way, Cecil, when discussing such a subject,' observed I coldly, 'not even of your own sister.'

'Why not?' said he simply, 'when she knows it as well as I, and when nothing can give her hope, or alter what is fated. You can never be her lover, Fred.; but if anything should happen to me, you must take my place as her brother, so far as you can. It has not been less painful to me, dear Fred., to broach this matter than for you to hear it spoken of. I have been cognisant of the fact for months, though you, lost in your Eleanor, may have been blind to it. One owes a woman something for her love, even if one cannot repay it in kind. Come, promise me to repay Jane, if ever it should be necessary, with your care and protection.'

'Most certainly, my dear Cecil, I will promise that,' said I: 'our common relationship, setting aside my affection for yourself, would dictate no less.'

'Thanks, Fred., thanks.' He pressed my hand, and walked on more quickly, as if relieved of some burden; my idea was then that he was thinking of his sister's comparatively friendless condition, in case he should marry Ruth, and Jane should refuse to sanction the alliance; but perhaps he alluded to the still more complete separation of Death.

'That you do not like Jane for her own sake,' he added presently, as though in continuation of some line of thought he had been pursuing in the meantime, 'I can only too easily imagine. I believe I am the only person in the world that does; I ought to do so, for there is no sacrifice, I verily believe, which she would not make for my benefit, or for what she considers to be such.'

'You are right there,' said I, eager to join in

any genuine commendation of one in whom I felt but a languid interest, and even that not of a favourable sort. 'The whole world, to Jane, seems to be comprehended in yourself. She watches you as a mother her child, or as a bride her husband, with eyes of loving duty; and when you speak, she hangs on your words as though they were honey, and she a bee.'

'Then you think she loves me dearly?' asked Cecil, looking up with animation.

'Of course, she does; who can doubt it?' asked I, surprised.

'No one, no one,' returned he. 'But you are wrong if you think she has no ambitions of her own, even beside that unhappy one of which we have been speaking, and which never can be gratified. Poor Jane, poor Jane!'

Here we turned into the avenue, and caught for the first time the gleam of the lamp in my father's study, a sight which made us quicken our pace to a rate that was incompatible with further talk.

CHAPTER XIV.—JANE AND I.

Though my father looked very grave when he opened the front-door for us, it was plain that he was relieved to see us. 'Good-night, Fred,' said he, in signification that I should retire, and beckoned Cecil into his study; my cousin wrung my hand as we parted, as much as to say: 'Whatever happens, I will take care that my offence shall not be any cause of breach between you and him; and I have no doubt he did his best to exonerate me from all blame; as for himself, it was clear to me he had thoroughly made up his mind as to his own course of conduct, however it might pain him to oppose himself to my father's wishes.'

As I passed by Aunt Ben's boudoir, the door softly opened, and Cousin Jane appeared, fully dressed.

'Hush!' said she, holding up her finger, as though in fear of some exclamation of astonishment escaping me. 'Will you come in here and speak to me for a minute?'

I obeyed at once, though hardly less surprised than I had been an hour ago to find her brother sitting on Richard Waller's bench. Of course, I thought she had long retired to rest, and certainly she looked like one who was quite unfitted to be out of her bed. A ghastly pallor sat on her features, and beneath her eyes were great black rims.

'My dear Jane,' said I, really shocked by this change in her appearance, which I felt was not so much caused by bodily indisposition as by anxiety on her brother's account, 'this is no time for you to be up, I'm sure: you will make yourself downright ill.'

'What matters?' returned she scornfully. Then, in quieter tones, she added: 'I cannot rest for thinking of Cecil. That is my only ailment. You can cure it.'

'Your brother is come home,' said I, 'all right. He is now with my father in the study.'

'And the girl?' inquired she eagerly. 'Where is she?'

'The girl,' repeated I. 'Do you mean Ruth Waller?'

'Who else should I mean?' returned she impatiently. 'She has left the Rectory: where has she gone to?'

'I believe to her own cottage.'

'Did you find her there?'

'No; I did not go to Wayford, at least not to the village. I found Cecil on the sand-cliff just above it. It was a great relief to me, as you may imagine.'

'Why?'

The question staggered me not a little. She had asked it peremptorily, like one who is really in a doubt that he wished solved.

'Why, because it would have been such a dreadful thing if I had not found him. If he had fled away from Gatecombe, for instance.'

'It would have been the best thing in the world,' answered she; 'that is, if they had fled together; for then he would not have married her.'

The vehemence of her manner, contrasted with the low tone in which she compelled herself to speak, was terrible; it seemed the very concentration of rage.

'You look shocked,' continued she, with contempt. 'You are thinking of her, and not of him; you have pity for her because she is pretty. I have no pity, except for him.'

'So it seems,' said I coldly.

'It is,' answered she fiercely. 'You men are all alike, as soft as wax, unless, indeed, when you have your own purposes to serve. Some people who are very tender are very cunning.'

There was something in her manner which reminded me of her behaviour on the occasion of Cecil's accident; her words: 'When he is dead, you will be satisfied,' seemed once more to ring in my ears.

'I may be cunning, Jane,' said I stiffly, 'but I cannot understand you.'

'I know it,' said she, her voice changing to quite a plaintive tone. 'Don't be vexed with me, if, remembering that you had helped Cecil to this girl, I spoke in bitterness.'

'But I did not help him to her, Jane,' was my quiet reply.

'You could have hindered him if you chose, Frederick. He made you his confidant. You could have told him what she was, and what she will be. Your tongue can be sharp enough when you please.'

'But I knew nothing against Ruth's character, Jane,' pleaded I; 'and as to her position and belongings, Cecil was as well aware of them as I.'

'You knew nothing!' repeated she, with contemptuous mimicry. 'You thought this drunken drab an angel, without doubt, as he did himself. I tell you I would rather see him dead before my eyes, than married to her. Such women should be whipped and put in the stocks.'

'For being beautiful?' said I. I spoke with bitterness, but not with any design to affront my cousin personally. My consternation, therefore, was excessive when, with a sharp and sudden cry, she hid her face in her hands, and burst into a flood of tears.

'My dear Jane,' said I soothingly, 'what is the meaning of all this? I can easily imagine that you are much annoyed with Cecil's choice. It annoys and distresses us all. But certainly there is no good to be done by vilifying the object of it. I have done my best—indeed, I have—to dissuade him from his purpose, and will continue to do so; but if you, or any one, were to speak of her as you have done to me, within his hearing, it would have the very contrary effect to that you wish. I do not like Ruth myself; but you move me to be her

defender. She is an honest girl enough in her way, and some day you will be sorry for having said such things.'

'I sorry?'

'Yea. For if your brother should marry her—and I honestly tell you I think he will—it will be the wisest, and indeed the only course for us all to make the best of it.'

'Your father did not say that to-night,' sobbed Jane hysterically. It was the first time that I had ever seen her in tears.

'No; because he draws, of course, the gloomiest picture of the prospect for Cecil's eyes, while it is still prospect; but much as your brother's marriage would distress him, it would not wound him so deeply as that at which you have hinted would have done, supposing Cecil had been capable of such conduct. You said I looked shocked—well, I felt shocked, that you should wish your brother had committed baseness.'

'Ah, you do not know what love is, Frederick, though you may think you do.'

'Nay,' said I, smiling, 'that is just what Cecil would tell you. In your devotion to him, it is true you would cheerfully sacrifice another; but he has sacrificed *himself*, remember.'

'Not yet, Frederick, surely not yet?' she pleaded passionately. 'Do you mean to say there is no hope?'

'In my opinion, very little, Jane.'

'But there is *some*,' urged she; 'I can see it in your face. You have never been cruel to me, Fred.; at least not designedly. I beseech you, for mercy's sake, to tell me wherein that hope lies?'

In spite of the anger which her harshness had stirred within me, I was moved by her plaintive earnestness, which had also something of personal tenderness in it, not perhaps displeasing to my vanity.

'Well, there is just one thing, Jane, which may prevent your brother's marriage with Ruth; yet that, alas! is what none of us can desire to happen.'

'What is it?' asked Jane impatiently. 'What can it be except his death?'

'His dishonour, or what he fancies to be such. While this mystery still hangs over Richard Waller's death, Cecil will certainly not marry Ruth; and perhaps it may hang for ever.'

'That is just possible,' observed Jane thoughtfully: 'it is a peculiarity of such idiots as this Batty, I have heard, to adhere with obstinacy to their delusions. Let us hope it will be so in this case.'

'I must differ from you there again, Jane,' said I gravely. 'If you had heard your brother speak of the matter to-night, you would hope anything rather than that the weight of this groundless charge should not be shifted to the right shoulders. It oppresses his very soul; he is not like the same man; nor will he ever be himself, in my opinion, while he bears it.'

'How strange,' said Jane, with a cold smile, 'that the shadow of a shadow should have such power! A drunken fellow, whose death, it seems, is a relief to everybody, is smothered in a sand-heap. A village idiot confesses that he was the cause of the accident, as he had already been of a similar mischance. Nothing appears simpler, or, I must say, more in accordance with the fitness of things. But because this Natural gets it into his

addled pate that a young gentleman gave him money thus to act—on a certain day, too, when it is proved that the thing could not possibly have occurred—there is all this trouble and bother!'

'Still,' said I, 'a verdict of wilful murder is a serious thing; and whoever bribed Batty to remove those propria was an accessory before the fact.'

'If he *was* bribed, perhaps it may be so; but who can suppose such a story to be true?'

'I do,' said I quietly; 'and what is of more consequence, Cecil does. If the blood of Richard Waller were really on his hands, he could hardly feel the matter more poignantly. It makes him shrink even from Ruth herself; and, as I have already told you, that result will be dearly purchased at the cost of his peace of mind. My hope is, however, that, at the trial next week, Batty will either withdraw his statement, or that his possession of the money may be accounted for in some other manner. In the meantime, I am most thankful on all accounts that Cecil has returned.'

'Well, you are wiser than I,' said Jane cheerfully; 'and if you are pleased, I suppose that I ought to be. I have kept you from your bed, when you were doubtless tired, and troubled you with many questions, besides inflicting on you my own views, which are wicked, it seems, as well as mistaken. Forgive me, cousin, and good-night.'

I took her hand, which was cold and damp as usual.

'Do not fret, Jane,' said I. 'In a few days' time, your brother's mind will doubtless be set at ease, and he may then be more amenable to reason. At present, if I were you, I would venture with him neither on argument nor persuasion.'

She nodded assent; and I left her standing by the table, rigid as a statue. As I closed the door, and while the handle was still in my fingers, I heard a heavy fall. I re-entered quickly, but without noise, fully expecting to see her stretched on the floor. But she had only dropped into her seat, with her elbows on the table, and her face buried in her hands—the very image of wretchedness and despair. She was evidently quite unconscious of my presence, and I withdrew at once with precipitation. Perhaps I had misjudged Jane, after all. Underneath that icy exterior, a heart might be beating full of sympathy, which was all the deeper, because it ran in a single channel. I could not believe that such emotion was produced by the thought of her brother's *mésalliance*; it must needs be therefore on account of the charge which had been brought against him; her endeavours to make light of it had been characteristic. She felt the disgrace and shame as bitterly as he did himself, but was too proud to own it.

At that moment I heard the study-door shut, and then voices in the hall.

'God bless you, sir!' I heard Cecil say, in broken tones, so like his sister's had been once that night, when she had shed tears, that I could have thought them to be the very same.

'And God bless *you*, my lad!' returned my father tenderly. 'A few days hence, and you will laugh at these forebodings. Come, come, Cecil; be a man.'